United Nations A/56/811-S/2002/147

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 February 2002

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda items 25, 28, 35, 39, 41, 56, 84, 95, 96, 97, 103 and 119

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

Culture of peace

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Towards global partnerships

Question of Palestine

Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development

Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security

Macroeconomic policy questions

Sectoral policy questions

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Human rights questions

Letter dated 5 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the statement of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, at the World Economic Forum, held in New York during the period 31 January to 4 February 2002 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 25, 28, 35, 39, 41, 56, 84, 95, 96, 97, 103 and 119, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 5 February 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic and English]

The Speech of His Highness

Shaikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani

The Amir of the State of Qatar

World Economic Forum
New York

31st of January – 4th of February 2002

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to have participated in the sessions of this international forum and to have followed its invaluable discussions and deliberations. I commend all those who contributed to organizing and running these sessions. I would also like to extend special thanks to Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and President of the World Economic Forum for his efforts in making this meeting a success.

Our gathering this year in New York has a significant bearing on the future of the world. It also emphasizes the necessity of exchanging views on the crises facing the world and the challenges besetting its people.

Having heard a number of important opinions, we are still looking for the effective cure and the required formula to tackle the problems and conflicts of our world, and hence, proceed vigorously to build a new community that is more secure, just and prosperous.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we wish to move from dialogue and discussions to effective cooperation in the building of an encompassing, global family, we have to address a number of vital issues.

It is my belief that the prosperity and security we seek, cannot be realized unless fair positions are adopted vis-a-vis the crucial problems presently facing the world.

It is essential that we settle the various chronic regional conflicts and crises that are draining energies in various parts of the world. It is only when international relations are based on the principles of justice, mutual respect and common interest, that we can envisage the possibility of establishing a new global community, united and all inclusive where the values of justice, freedom and democracy prevail and the diversity of cultures and equality of opportunities are fully respected. In such a world, all feel equal in rights and obligations under international laws and human values.

It is equally important to stress that the distribution of wealth in the world is still unacceptably tilted in favour of a minority. The new world order must address the needs and aspirations of the developing countries whose populations constitute the great majority. There must be an effective mechanism that makes it possible for these countries (especially the least developed ones) to take part in shaping this order, as well as interpreting its connotations in such a manner as to enable them to reap greater benefits from it in the future. It is necessary that this order should lend special attention for the development in these countries, open up the markets for them and establish the principle of justice and fairness in dealing with them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, our world stands at a crossroads. We have to choose which direction to take. Are we going to build a new world on the basis of integration and interaction, or are we – God forbid – threatened with slipping into a world dominated by confrontation, and insurmountable conflicts?

A lot has been said during the recent past about the international community facing a clash of cultures, a conflict of religions. To some, the terrorist attacks on the United States of America last September marked the beginning of an alleged Islamic war against the West, its civilization and way of life. To others, the war against terrorism declared by the United States and its allies is a crusade against Islam and Muslims.

Both of these positions fail to bring out the essence of the problem we are facing. Neither the terrorism that took place was an expression of Islam or Arab and Muslim sentiments, nor do the current international efforts to combat terrorism constitute a western counter-campaign against Islam or Muslims. We reject these false and unjust descriptions and labels.

Just as we, as Muslims have no doubts about the need to combat terrorism, our friends in the West should have no misconception about the true nature of Islam. Nothing can better demonstrate the keenness of Muslims for co-existence among all the human beings than the Holy Quran. God has prohibited the taking of human life and held it as one of the greatest sins. He decreed that Muslims shall not abuse those who are of a different creed, but urged them strongly to be good to them as in God's holy words:

"God forbids you not,
With regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith,
Nor drive you out
Of your homes,
From dealing kindly and justly
With them."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is high time that we focus our efforts in the Arab and Islamic world, as well as, in the third world, on the priorities and development, setting up democratic institutions and establishing systems of government respectful of the principles of law, human rights, economic freedom, and combating corruption. This is the only way for us to meet and fulfill the legitimate hopes and aspirations of our people.

In their turn, the industrial countries and societies have to contribute to this effort and provide the necessary means and conditions to help developing countries realize their ambitions. The West has to adopt more equitable positions towards the grievances of those countries. Hesitation to do so can only lead to further misunderstanding and mistrust.

If we work together to bring about just settlements for the tragic crises plaguing the Arab and Muslim peoples in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya and elsewhere; and if we all cooperate to alleviate the impact of poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment and other challenges facing many in our world, we would have actually taken the first step required for building a global family having common interests and objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We call for justice and effective participation in this international community to make it a better place for our peoples and younger generations.

Thank you all, once again, and I wish you further success and prosperity.

May the peace and blessings of God be upon you.